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SPENCER  
FAMILY HISTORY  
AND  
GENEALOGY.





## PREFACE.

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**I**N collecting materials for a biography of Platt R. Spencer, difficulties encountered in tracing his lineage and the interest which they have awakened suggest these pages, designed to stimulate and assist inquiry regarding Spencer family history and genealogy, both in America and the Old World, respecting which correspondence is solicited by

ROBERT C. SPENCER,

Milwaukee, Wis., U. S. A.

August 1, 1889.





Spencer House, Newbury, Essex County, Mass.

The latest conclusion from evidence thus far obtained, entirely circumstantial, is that this house was built by Mr. John Spencer, a young English gentleman, between 1648 and 1650. Regarding the correctness of this conclusion there seems to be little room for doubt. Circumstantial evidence also proves that the young Mr. John Spencer who built this house is identical with the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island, from whom are descended most of the Spencers who trace their origin to that colony. This latter conclusion is not, however, as well established as the former, but is thought by competent judges whose opinions have been consulted to be quite correct.—R. C. S.



**I**N OLD NEWBURY, a little way east of Newburyport, Mass., stands an interesting old house variously known as the "Pierce House," the "Garrison House," the "Pettengale House," and the "Little House," from its different owners, and because it is supposed to have once been used as a garrison house.

This house is in the style of English country houses, of which it is a specimen, belonging to the sixteenth century. It is approached by a private avenue which descends gently to the north toward Merrimac river and intervening meadows, from the highway that extends eastward from the city of Newburyport toward the sea, along the crest of Merrimac Ridge. The accompanying cut, photo-engraved from a pen and ink sketch by Robert C. Spencer, Jr., gives a partial view of the front elevation of this house. It is built mostly of stone in the form of a cross. The porch is of brick, probably brought from England, and is considered the most beautiful specimen of architecture of that early period in New England. When and by whom this house was built is not positively known, but the latest conclusion from circumstantial evidence is that it was built about 1630 by Mr. John Spencer, a young Englishman, to whom the estate on which the house stands was willed by his uncle, Capt. John Spencer, in 1637. The nephew is supposed to be identical with the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island, who died in East Greenwich in that colony in 1684, from whom are descended most of the Spencers who trace their ancestry to Rhode Island.

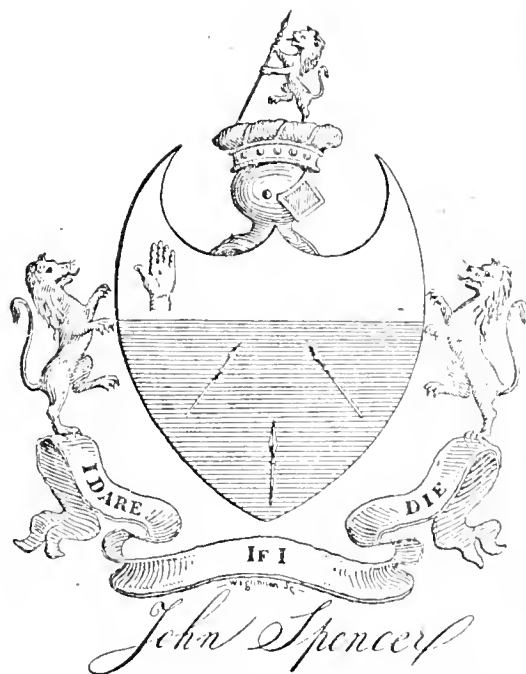
NOTE.—Harpers' Monthly Magazine for July, 1875, contains an illustrated article by Harriett Prescott Spofford, entitled "Newburyport and its Neighborhood." It gives a view of the great porch of the ancient house in Old Newbury, just east of the city of Newburyport. Mrs. Spofford discusses the disputed question regarding the antiquity and purpose of the structure, and coincides with those who are led to believe, by its beautiful and finished architecture, that it was not, as some have supposed, a garrison house, but that it was designed for a wealthy residence.

Mrs. Spofford remarks that "The great porch of this old house is said to be the most beautiful architectural specimen in this part of the country, although it doubtless owes a part of its beauty to the mellow and varied coloring which two hundred years have given it." She mentions "the beveled brick of its arches and casements, and the exquisite nicety of its ornamentation" as evidence that "it was not intended for the rough usage of a garrison-house, an idea which (she thinks) gained currency from the fact that it was once used to store powder in—a fact that was fixed in the popular memory by an explosion there which blew out the side of the house, and landed an old slave of the occupant on her bed, in the boughs of an adjacent apple-tree."

Mr. H. B. Little, Newburyport, Mass., informs me that he always understood from his father, the late Edward H. Little, who owned it, that the house was built by Mr. John Spencer. Mr. Little also informs me that his wife is descended from Daniel Pierce, and that there is no claim or tradition in the Pierce family that the house was built by any of its members.

Mr. William Little, in searching Newbury records, has discovered that the particular piece of land on which the house stands was not granted to John Spencer, the uncle, until 1638, on the eve of his return to England, from which, and from other circumstances, it is inferred that it was built later by young John Spencer, the nephew, whose title to the property was perfected under the will by his uncle's death, which seems to have occurred in 1647.





THIS coat-of-arms will perhaps throw light on the two Spencers, uncle and nephew, who at an early day were at Newbury, Mass. It may have belonged to the uncle, and if so will assist in tracing him in England.

A lady in Haverhill, Massachusetts, whose name he did not learn, sent Rev. W. H. Spencer, who was then pastor of a Unitarian church in that place, the engraving from which this cut was made. The motto is a brave one.

In East Greenwich, R. I., where he died, is an old coat-of-arms or hatchment, that tradition says belonged to the first John Speneer of that colony, which indicate that the bearer was of good family. Among some of his descendants there is a tradition that he was a younger son of an English nobleman. On the back of the arms is inscribed, "Sir Robert Spencer, Knight,

Northampton," referring possibly to Lord Robert, who died in 1627. The arms are such as might have belonged to a younger son of a nobleman. A copy of these arms recently made in colors by Robert C. Spencer, Jr., will, it is hoped, assist in tracing the pedigree of the first John Speneer, of Rhode Island.





ENGRAVED FOR THE SENATOR.



THE accompanying portrait represents, perhaps, the Sir Robert Spencer, whose name and place of residence are inscribed on the back of the old coat-of-arms before mentioned, and shown on another page.

*Lord Robert Spencer.*

Member for Wareham

*Drawn from Life by W. L. Brown. Engraved by W. Crangin, & Published according to Act of Parliament by G. Cooke, No. 7, Paternoster Row, London.*

NOTE.—Lyman P. Spencer, writing regarding the above, gives the following information:

'This engraving is a portrait of a son of the second Duke of Marlborough. He was born in 1747; educated at Chi. Ch. Oxford; Member of Parliament for Wareham, Woodstock, Oxford and Taristock; Vice-Treasurer for Ireland; died in Arlington St., London, 1831.





C. Maratta Pinx

ROBERT SPENCER.

EARL OF SUNDERLAND

OB. 1702

\***E**ARL ROBERT SPENCER, whose portrait is here presented, may have been akin. Little credit is given the tradition that the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island, was of noble birth. It is thought more probable that he belonged to the upper middle class. The provision made for the nephew by his uncle's will in 1637, at Newbury, implies that he was without natural guardians, and suggests that he might have been the son of Lord Robert, who died in 1627, ten years previous to the date of the uncle's will bequeathing to the nephew the bulk of his New England estate, and placing him and his affairs under the guardianship of prominent Newbury men, who not long thereafter removed to Rhode Island, whither it is believed the nephew also went to reside about 1652, after disposing of his Newbury estate, including the house he had built there, a view of which is given on page three.

\* "Robert Spencer, Second Earl of Sunderland, only son of Henry Spencer, First Earl of Sunderland, who was killed by a cannon ball at the battle of Newbury, while fighting for King Charles in the year 1643."



## John, William, Thomas and Jared Spencer.

**A**MONG those who took passage from London for New England on the ship Mary and John, John Sayers, master, March 26th, 1633, were John and William Spencer. John went to Ipswich, Essex County, Massachusetts, which he represented in the general court. In 1635 he removed to Newbury, where he was one of the first settlers, and which he also represented in general court and was also appointed captain for Newbury. He was granted a beautiful and fertile tract of land in Newbury for assistance in settling the town and for services in conducting its weightier affairs. In 1637 he was disarmed, together with many others, and deprived of the captaincy by the general court on account of his Antinomian religious opinions. These persecutions probably caused him to return to England in 1638, where he died in 1647.

He made a will in June, 1637, giving most of his New England estate to his nephew, John Spencer. The will provided for the payment of legacies within three years after his death to Rev. John Cotton, Boston; to each of his (Spencer's) household servants; to his cousin, Ann Knight, and her children, Newbury; to the children of his brother, Thomas Spencer, and to Thomas Theacher.

He committed the oversight and execution of his will, and commended his nephew, John Spencer, together with his estate, to be managed and ordered for his good, and his education to be their care, to his friends, Mr. Dane, Mr. Richard Dummer, Mr. Nicholas Easton, Mr. Foster, of Ipswich, and Goodman Mott, of Hingham. The conditions of the will show that the uncle was unmarried and expected to die single, and that the nephew was a youth whose education was to be the special care of his guardians.

Soon after his uncle's death the nephew began to dispose of his Newbury estate in small



parcels, and on November 26th, 1651, sold to his uncle, Daniel Pierce (the first American ancestor of President Franklin Pierce), the last of it, consisting of 300 acres of land, on which stands the old house. The terms of this sale were such that the nephew might take it back within seven years to come and live on it himself, implying a desire and hope to do so. The name "Pierce House," which the old mansion bears, had its origin in the fact that it was long owned and occupied by Daniel Pierce and his descendants, among whom there is no claim or tradition that he or any of them built it.

In the same ship which brought John Spencer to New England, also came \*William Spencer, supposed to be the one who settled in Cambridge, and in 1635 removed to Hartford, Connecticut, where he was one of the first settlers and was prominent in that colony. It is not known what kinship, if any, existed between John and William. The Thomas Spencer who settled in the Connecticut colony, may be identical with the brother Thomas Spencer mentioned in John's will. If so, the uncle, of Newbury, and William, Thomas and Jared, of Hartford, Conn., were probably brothers. But there is some trace of a Thomas Spencer in New Hampshire, who may have been the brother of John, mentioned in his will.

These investigations regarding Spencer family history and genealogy are being carried on by the sons of Platt R. Spencer, descended from the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island, through Capt. Robert, Michael and Caleb. Capt. Robert's children were by his first wife, Theodosia Whaley, daughter of Theophilus Whaley, supposed to be a cousin of Oliver Cromwell, and descended maternally from William the Conqueror. The sons of Platt R. Spencer ask the co-operation of the Spencers and persons of Spencer descent in the work of tracing Spencer genealogy and in collecting Spencer family history. Please address

ROBERT C. SPENCER,  
Milwaukee, Wis., U. S. A.

\* This William Spencer is supposed to have been at Cambridge as early as 1632; but to have returned to England and married there in 1633; then, on his return to America, to have brought his brother John with him.—L. P. S.









## The Spencer Pedigree.

**M**R. MARK FORREST, from London, England, who has given attention to genealogy and heraldry, offers the following opinions and suggestions concerning the Spencer pedigree, based on the limited information before him and the old coat-of-arms photo-engraved, a copy of which is herewith presented, showing some of the evidences of age that mark the crumbling original now in the possession of Mr. Tom C. Brown, of East Greenwich, R. I., to whom they seem to have descended from Dr. Thomas Spencer, son of the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island colony. The following, offered by Mr. Forrest, will, it is hoped, prove helpful in tracing Spencer pedigree and history in England:

### *Inquiries Concerning the "Spencer" Pedigree.*

Though the time and limited means of inquiry at my disposal have prevented my making a full investigation, such evidence as I have been able to examine leads me to strongly believe that "John Spencer," of Ipswich, Mass., who came from England in 1634, was of good family and gentle blood.

I base this opinion upon the many evidences that he was, from the time of his arrival in the colony, looked upon as a man of importance and prominent standing. For instance: He was twice elected to the colonial legislature; he was

on terms of intimacy with the most prominent men in the settlement; was appointed captain, served on the "Endicott" Committee, etc., and a further proof of the estimation in which he was held was shown by a grant of 450 acres of excellent land "for his services in settling the colony."

The coat-of-arms, of which a photographic copy has been shown me, is presumed, by a family tradition, to have belonged to his nephew, the younger John Spencer, whom he brought with him from England and left here, under guardians, when he returned to the old country. This younger J. S. I believe to be identical with



the J. S. of East Greenwich, R. I. I am disposed to think the coat quite genuine. It is good heraldry, and just such a coat as might have been rightfully borne by one of the younger branches of a good house. The inscription on the back is partly hidden by wooden bars and a portion of the exposed writing is stained and indistinct, but from so much as is readable, I think it would run like this:

*Armor of (Sir) Robert (Spencer),  
Knight of the County of Northampton*

The name of Spencer, though faded, is fairly readable on the scroll under the shield, and I think it might be worth while to carefully trace the descent of Sir Robert Spencer, Knight of Wormleighton, in the County of Warwick, 1603.

To take them in order I am of opinion that the best means of tracing John Spencer, of Ipswich, Mass., would be to find out—

1st—What other issue, if any, did the first Sir J. S. (1506) have, beside the son William, who succeeded him?

2d—Of the five sons of the third Sir J. S. (he died in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, year not known), what issue had the sons Thomas, William and Richard?

Thomas settled at Claverdon, County Warwick.  
William settled at Yarnton, County Oxford.  
Richard settled in Olney, County of Herts.

3d—What other issue, if any, had Sir Robert Spencer, who died 1627, beside the son who succeeded him?

4th—What was the *other issue* of Lord Wm. Spencer, beside Henry, who succeeded him?

Of these four points for inquiry I think the second section worth especial attention, for I believe it will be found that the J. S. who came to America in 1634 was descended from one of the three brothers whose names I have bracketed together. As the best means to this end, as well as to trace the presumed connection between the nephew J. S. and the J. S. of East Greenwich, I think it would be advisable to communicate with some of the following people, any of whom may be able to furnish some useful information:

1st—Sir Albert Woods, Garter King at Arms, Herald's College, Queen Victoria Street, London, E. C., asking for information respecting the Grant of Arms, (copy should be enclosed).

2d—Mr. Bond, Principal Librarian British Museum, Great Russell Street, London, W. C.

Any information relating to—

a. The four points queried in the Spencer line of descent?



b. The circumstances attending the sailing of the "Mary and John" from London to New England in 1633 or '34?

3d—The Editor of "Notes and Queries," London, W. (I think the office is in Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, but am not sure.) Copy Mr. Bond's letter.

4th—The Editor of "Notes and Queries," American Edition. Copy Mr. Bond's letter, but with additions respecting nephew J. S. and J. S. of East Greenwich.

5th—The Editor of "Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica," Wardour St., Oxford Street, London, W., asking for information respecting Arms, which should be enclosed, and also respecting the four points queried in the pedigree?

6th—To the principal librarian, Guildhall, London, E. C.

Respecting the "Mary and John." Also respecting the descent of—

a. Sir James Spencer, Lord Mayor of London, 1529.

b. Sir John Speneer, Lord Mayor of London, 1594.

7th—Editor of Nicholl's "Genealogist."

Copy Mr. Bond's letter and enclose copy of arms

8th—To the clergyman at Yarnton, in Oxford, asking if he can furnish from his registers any information respecting the descent of Sir William Spencer, who settled there some time toward the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

9th—The clergyman at Claverdon, concerning Thomas Spencer, same date.

10th—The clergyman at Offley, County of Herts, concerning Richard Spencer, same date.

11th—The clergyman at Wormleighton, concerning Sir Robert Spencer, 1603.

12th—To the clergyman at Althorp, concerning the family in general.

Concerning the coat-of-arms, I have discovered that the crest is identical with that of the main line of Wormleighton and Althorp, a practically conclusive evidence of kinship, but the arms differ, and I think it very probable that the coat was acquired by one of the four following means:

1st—They might be arms of adoption; that is to say, arms especially granted by the sovereign to empower the bearer to obtain money or estates bequeathed on the condition of his assuming the name or arms of the testator.





2d—Arms of assumption; that is to say, adopted without the formality of a grant from the sovereign or king at arms, and used as a matter of personal right. Thus, if a prince or nobleman be taken prisoner in war, his captor has the right to take and bear his arms and can transmit the right to his heirs. Cases in point occurred frequently during the civil war between King Charles and the commonwealth.

3d—Arms of concession or augmentation. Marks of honor granted by the sovereign for some service rendered to the state.

4th—Arms paternal or hereditary. Those transmitted by the first possessor to his heirs. I am of opinion that the coat in question belongs to the third class, and think it most probable that the arms attributed to the nephew (believed to be identical with J. S. of East Greenwich), will be found to have been granted to some descendant (possibly a military or naval officer) of one of the three brothers of the Sir J. S. who died in 1599.

The helmet is that of an esquire, showing that the bearer was of that rank, next below a knight. Esquire being the highest rank of commoner bearing no family titles.

When rightfully used it can only be borne by younger sons of peers, the officers of the royal

court and household, counsellors at law, and justices of the peace, while in commission.

The crown represents an ordinary ducal coronet so-called, and was a band of leather or metal, which was used to hide the point of juncture between the crest and the helmet which supported it, the crest itself being generally made of light wood, carved or modelled in soft leather.

The twist below the coronet is the wreath, which was generally formed of two scarves of silk, one showing the principal metal and the other the principal color used in the coat-of-arms. They were twined together and tied round the helmet to fasten the crest in its place.

The ornamental arrangement, which it is now customary to show, surrounding the shield, represents the mantle or lambrequin, a small cape, generally lined with ermine, which was suspended from the wreath and hung behind the helmet to protect the metal from dust, etc.

The flourishes and ragged edges in the mantling are a conventional rendering of the cuts and slashes which the mantling generally received in battle.

With regard to the presumed connection between nephew J. S. and the J. S. of East Greenwich, I would suggest, as the best means of tracing such connection:



1st—To seek the first owner of the Newport and Middleton lands, which were sold by a later J. S. in 1708, as thereby some knowledge might be gained as to when J. S. of East Greenwich, first came to Newport.

2d—To trace, so far as may be practicable, the Spencers known to have been settled here or to have arrived previous to the first definite date known in connection with J. S. of East Greenwich, 1661.

I think it might be quite practicable to do this, but would certainly defer any such inquiry

till that portion of the investigation relating to the uncle, J. S. of *Ipswich*, be completed, as I think it quite probable that much may be learned in tracing the history of the elder J. S. which would be of material value and save much time in the latter part of the inquiry respecting the nephew, J. S. and J. S. of East Greenwich.

MARK FORREST.

Milwaukee, July 3d, 1889.

NOTE.—Lyman P. Spencer writes as follows regarding the foregoing: "Several years ago I followed out the lines of three sons of Sir John Spencer (Thomas, of Clarendon, William, of Yarnton, and Richard of Offley, in Hertfordshire) far enough to satisfy myself that our first ancestors in this country did not spring from them. I would not wish to impose my conclusions upon others, but am of the opinion that if our line is sprung from that stock the point of divergence is further back. Again it seems quite certain that the old Spencer Arms of East Greenwich, R. I., are not arms of concession as Mr. Forrest supposes, but arms of *assumption*, and for that reason I fear they may not prove of the value they might otherwise be in investigating at the College of Arms.

"I sometimes fear that the old Arms of East Greenwich may have been a piece of feminine vanity indulged in by Mrs. — after the death of Dr. Thomas Spencer, and the importance of which became overrated after a generation or two, the origin being lost sight of. In three different families I have seen colored drawings of Spencer Arms, copies of or similar to those of the Earl Spencer or Duke of Marlborough, and as to which it seemed quite certain the people who displayed them had no heraldic right to bear them; and the East Greenwich Arms may be another similar example of more remote date. Still, the probability that John, of East Greenwich, was identical with the nephew John of Newbury, and also the similarity of the writing on the back of the arms to that of Dr. Thomas Spencer tells against this supposition."





*J. R. Spencer*

Descended from the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island, through Capt. Robert and Theodosia Whaley Spencer,  
Michael Spencer and Caleb Spencer.



## Platt Rogers Spencer.

IT seems fitting that a brief biographical sketch should be here given of Platt R. Spencer, the interest in whose life and pedigree have induced the investigation herein considered.

Platt Rogers Spencer whose portrait is herewith presented is chiefly known as the originator and author of the Spencerian style and system of Penmanship. His work as originator, teacher and author in this important branch of art and education was at a time when steam, electricity, invention, science and modern enterprise introduced the marvelous industrial, commercial, social and educational developments which his labors and achievements have assisted. In him were combined the elements of genius which enabled him at a fortunate juncture to happily blend the practical and artistic in giving to the world a distinctively American chirography. His intuitive insight into the philosophy of art and education applied to practical penmanship, enabled him to revolutionize this branch of instruction, and to give to America a hand writing surpassing that of all other countries for legibility, ease of execution, beauty and adaptation to the varying needs and tastes of a highly practical and original people.

Much of his work in improving and diffusing the art of writing was under difficulties and discouragements incident to pioneer life in the wilds of northern Ohio, in the first half of the nineteenth century. How strikingly do these conditions contrast with those of the English masters who wrought under the patronage of the crown and the nobility to which was added the stimulus and encouragement of an appropriation of £50,000 by Parliament for the improvement of English systems of penmanship.

The impress which Mr. Spencer made upon the world through improvements in business writing is allied to that of Fulton, Stevenson, Morse, Hoe, Horace Man and others who have contributed to the material, intellectual, educational and social development of the age. As penman, teacher and author Mr. Spencer combined with high regard for practical utility, æsthetic and humane tendencies that invested what he said and did with poetic charm and the glow and warmth of generous and tender sympathies. These traits





attracted and inspired superior minds in the various walks of life giving to his genius and work greater influence than English masters achieved.

For the improvement and diffusion of the noble and beautiful art of writing which Mirabeau pronounced "The greatest invention of the human mind," Mr. Spencer wrought unselfishly and with enthusiasm for the benefit of the masses in whom his faith was sublimely democratic. Few men have lived whose memory is more gratefully cherished by multitudes in the educational, business and social world who revere him as a benefactor.

Nothing that has been said of Platt R. Spencer, gives a more correct estimate of the man and his work than the following:

#### SKETCH BY JAMES A. GARFIELD.

I first saw Mr. Spencer in 1857, when he came to Hillam, Ohio, and delivered a lecture before the students of the Eclectic Institute. I was struck with the clearness and originality of his mind, and with the pathetic tenderness of his spirit. Soon afterwards he and his sons took charge of the department of penmanship at the Institute, and from that time forward I was intimately acquainted with his mind and heart. I have met few men who so completely won my confidence and affection. The beautiful in nature and art led him a willing and happy captive.

To know what looks a man delights in, enables us to know the man himself; and when I say that Robert Burns was one of his favorite authors, it is equivalent to saying that a keen relish for the humorous, sympathy with the lowly, and love for all that is beautiful in nature and art, were the distinguishing traits of his character. Like all men who are well made, he was self-made. Though his boyhood was limited by the hard lot of pioneer life, his love for the beautiful found expression in an art which his genius raised from the grade of manual drudgery to the rank of a fine art. It is honorable to undertake any worthy work and accomplish it successfully. It is great to become the first in any such work, and it is unquestionably true that Mr. Spencer made himself the foremost penman of the world. And this he did without masters. He not only became the first penman, but he analyzed all the elements of chirography, simplified its forms, arranged them in consecutive order, and created a system which has

become the foundation of instruction in that art in all the public schools of our country.

But his mind was too large and his sympathy too quick and active to be confined to any one pursuit. The poor and oppressed found in him a champion. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to those who were struggling for a higher culture; for he had experienced in his own life the obstacles which poverty places in the pathway of generous and ambitious youth. To such a nature the right of every man to his freedom was as clear as his right to the air and sunshine, and hence we find that in the beginning of the anti-slavery agitation, at a time when sympathy with the slave meant not only political but social ostracism, Mr. Spencer was outspoken in his denunciation of slavery in all its forms. I shall never forget the ardor with which he supported the cause of the Union against the slaveholder's rebellion, and the sadness with which he referred to the fact that he was too old to serve his country in the field. He did not live to see the final triumph of the Union, but he saw the light of coming victory, and shared the joy of its promise.

To the thousands of young men and women who enjoyed the benefit of his brilliant instruction, to the still larger circle of his friends and acquaintances, and to all who love a gifted, noble and true-hearted man, the memory of his life will remain a perpetual benediction.

JAMES A. GARFIELD.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 20, 1878.



Mr. Spencer was a pleasing, persuasive and eloquent speaker and wrote well both prose and poetry. His tendencies were strongly toward reformatory and philanthropic movements in which he participated intelligently and judiciously. His interest in and acquaintance with American history and progress was large. Chiefly through his instrumentality was collected the pioneer history of Ashtabula County, Ohio. Twelve years he served his county as treasurer, was considered a model public officer and declined re-election.

He was prominently identified with and zealous in the establishment of the system of American business college and education, was most deeply interested in public schools, was thoroughly alive to the claims of higher education and gave to every instrumentality for the promotion of human improvement and happiness his earnest support.

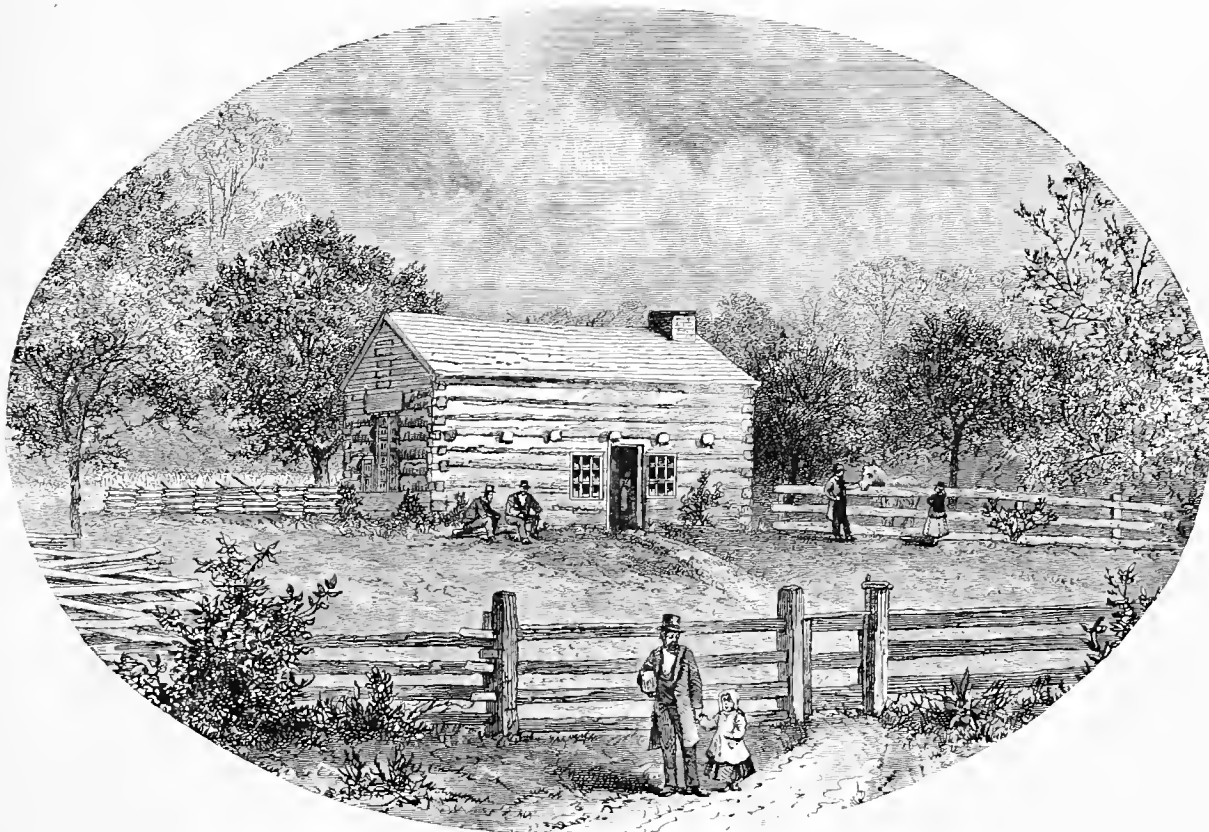
His professional and official duties called him much to cities and large towns, but he was passionately fond of rural life and delighted in nature and the companionship of friends. No where was he so happy and charming as in the bosom of his family in his hospitable home on the farm in Geneva, Ashtabula County, Ohio, near the shore of Lake Erie amid whose quiet scenes, verdure and bloom he passed serenely away May 16, 1864, saying with his last breath, "Into thy hands O God I commit my spirit."

Platt Rogers Spencer was the youngest of a family of ten children. He was born November 7, 1800, in East Fishkill, <sup>Dutchess</sup> Dutchess County, New York. In this county and in Windham, Green County, N. Y., he lived until he was nine years old, when he removed with his widowed mother and family to Jefferson, Ashtabula County, Ohio, then a wilderness country.

Although by no means indifferent to family history and genealogy he had only a few incorrect traditions relative to his first American ancestors which have, however, furnished helpful clues by which his sons have been enabled to pursue investigation regarding his pedigree, which they have traced to the first John Spencer of Rhode Island, researches regarding whose origin are now in progress. *Probably John, son of Edward the immigrant, etc. in 1639*

The reader will, it is hoped, kindly pardon any appearance of undue partiality born of filial regard which may have caused the writer to invest the subject of this sketch with over much consequence.





### Spencer's Log Seminary.

GENEVA, ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

**F**ROM this primitive cabin in which he taught, on the southern shore of Lake Erie, fifty miles east of the city of Cleveland, the Spencerian Style and System of Penmanship, prevalent in America, were disseminated by the originator and author, Platt R. Spencer, who was a self-taught pioneer boy, with a genius and passion for nature, art, education and humanity. He was a splendid optimist.



# Origin of Spencerian Writing.

BY P. R. SPENCER.

In the absence of other materials, Mr. Spencer, when a boy, practiced writing on the smooth sandy beach, on the snow, the bark of trees, the fly leaves of his mother's bible, and by permission on the leather in a shoemaker's shop.

**E**VOLVED mid nature's unpruned scenes,  
On Erie's wild and woody shore,  
The rolling wave, the dancing stream,  
The wild rose haunts—in days of yore.

The opal, quartz, and ammonite,  
Gleaming beneath the wavelet's flow,  
Each gave its lesson—how to write—  
In the loved years of long ago.

I seized the forms I loved so well—  
Compounded them as meaning signs,  
And to the music of the swell,  
Blent them with undulating vines.

Thanks, nature, for the impress pure!  
Those tracings in the sand are gone;  
But while the love of thee endures,  
Their grace and ease shall still live on.







## \* Ode to the Pen.

*By P. R. SPENCER, Author Spencerian Penmanship.*

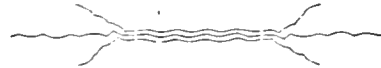
**H**AIL, Servant Pen! to thee we give  
Another pleasant hour—  
'Tis thine to bid our memories live,  
And weave our thoughts in flowers!

In school-day scenes and social bowers,  
It paints our visions gay;  
And yields to life's declining hours,  
A solace in decay.

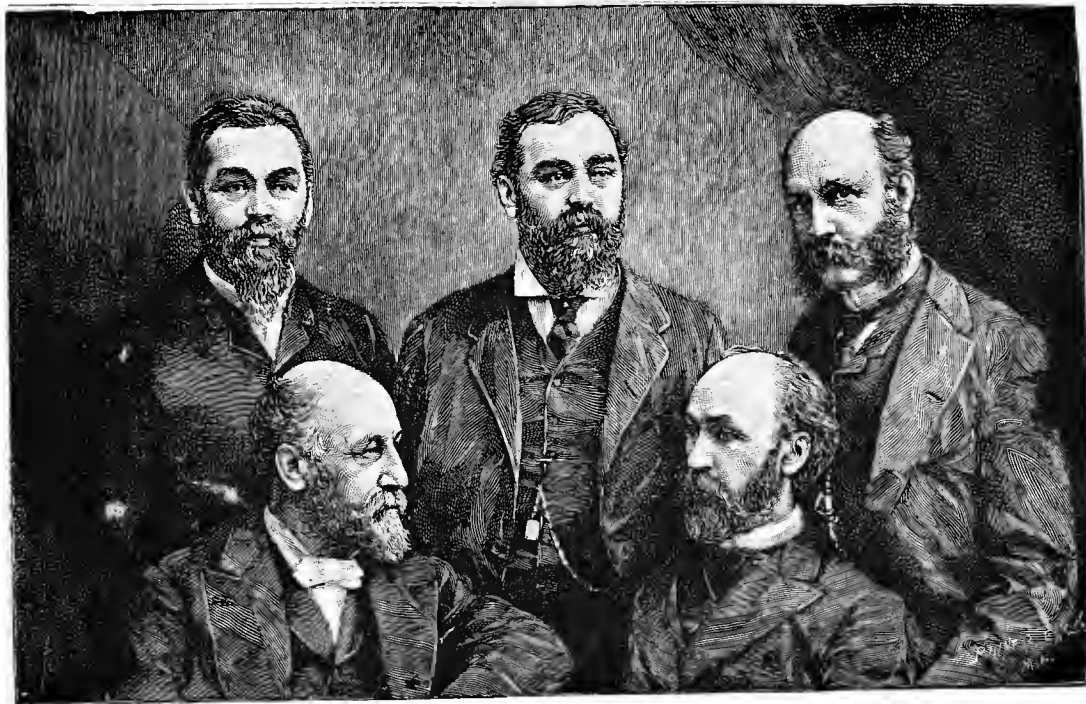
The pen, the pen, the brave old pen  
Which stamped our thoughts of yore,  
Through its bold tracings oft again  
Our thoughts still freshly pour.

Then be thy movements bold and true,  
Friend of the laboring mind;  
Light, shade and form entrance the view,  
And glow through every line.

\* Sung in Mr. Spencer's writing classes in the log seminary and elsewhere, and in public schools.







ROBERT CLOSSON SPENCER,  
Milwaukee, Wis.

LYMAN POTTER SPENCER,  
Newark, N. J.

HARVEY ALDEN SPENCER,  
New York City.

HENRY CALEB SPENCER,  
Washington, D. C.

PLATT ROGERS SPENCER, Jr.,  
Detroit, Mich.

SPENCER BROTHERS.—PLATT R. SPENCER'S SONS.

The sixth generation descended from the first John Spencer of Rhode Island.



## AMERICAN FAMILY HISTORY AND PEDIGREE.

There is a growing sentiment among the more thoughtful, intelligent and far-seeing in this country, that family history and pedigree have not received and do not now receive due attention.

Neglect of the subject is traceable to the democratic sentiment prevalent from colonial times and to the unfavorable conditions of our society and lack of necessary legal requirements relating to records of marriages, births, deaths, arrivals, removals, nationality, religion, education and occupation. From the first beginnings of American society and institutions, ancestry has been considered of little importance. Ancestral rank and honor, so carefully guarded and perpetuated in England, have been measurably ignored in America.

The democratic sentiment of equality of rights which in America has taken the place of the class feelings and distinctions dominant in the old world has theoretically, at least, placed all men upon a level as individuals, justly holding each responsible for himself and giving him a chance to make the most and the best of himself, irrespective of ancestral conditions. This order of society has on the whole proven wise and beneficent beyond all expectation. Our object should be not to change but to improve it, and so far as family history and pedigree can promote this end they are entitled to the serious attention of every lover of his kind, every friend of democratic society and free institutions. That much may be done by the proper use of family history and pedigree to improve the race will be readily admitted by all who have any knowledge of the workings of the natural laws of heredity and selection. Not only so, but ancestral regard is an ennobling sentiment which, properly exercised, tends to elevate the character of individuals and communities.

### RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL CONDITIONS.

In none of the American colonies was the democratic sentiment so intense as in Rhode Island, where all marks of rank and distinction were early repudiated and persistently ignored with a popular unanimity and vigor that has imbued the descendants of Rhode



Island families with deep seated repugnance to every form of hereditary pretension, a feeling that in some instances is carried to ridiculous extremes.

Into this colony and under these conditions it is believed the YOUNG JOHN SPENCER, OF NEWBURY, MASS. came about 1652 after disposing of his Newbury estate inherited from his uncle, the first John Spencer, of Newbury, Mass., who returned to England in 1638. This young John Spencer it is thought belonged to the English gentry but evidently adopted the democratic spirit and principle of Rhode Island colony where he seems to have remained in obscurity until the latter years of his life, when he removed from Newport and became prominent in the settlement of East Greenwich. In Rhode Island his rank of gentleman was doubtless laid aside and he entered industriously, with his fellow citizens, upon the hard struggles of pioneer life.

Little remains to show what he was. In his pocket book at his death was found a very minute record of the births of his nine children, indicating that he was a man of unusual tenderness of feeling, but no record of himself or his wife are known to exist.

The inventory of his estate after his death indicates that he was engaged in farming, shoe-making and boating and the records show that he was the principal town official, while maps of the town indicate that he owned the most eligible real estate. He had four Indian servants presumed to have been captured during the King Phillip war in which he was engaged. No inventory appears of books or family pictures but a gentleman's small sword is listed, suggesting that it was probably a relic of his English rank.

The general indifference to the subject accounts doubtless for the inattention and neglect with which the Spencer coat of arms have been treated, which tradition says belonged to him and which are now time stained and crumbling.

What may have been the causes that impelled him to part with his Newbury estate is left entirely to conjecture and circumstantial evidence.

The erection of the fine mansion suggests an intention to marry which may have been disappointed by death or other causes and the loss and sorrow may have deeply affected him and materially changed his plans and fortunes in life. Not until about twelve years





later did he marry Susannah (Griffin?) who bore him the eight sons and one daughter whose descendants have contributed largely toward populating this new world.

If it shall be positively proven, as it is believed it ultimately will be, that the nephew John Spencer, of Newbury, Mass. is identical with the first John Spencer, of Rhode Island, deeper interest will be felt among his descendants in the old Newbury mansion and in the early history of its builder and master. With it doubtless are connected romance, reverses of fortune and depressing disappointments that may account for the obscurity of the early residence of John Spencer, in Rhode Island.

These circumstances have perhaps left their impress upon the character and fortunes of his descendents down to the present time.

Were the mistakes, misfortunes and weaknesses as well as the virtues of our ancestors known to us the knowledge might be made useful in many ways. But much that is interesting and valuable has been lost beyond hope of recovery through ignorance, indifference and neglect, and we are left to grope dimly along the pathways of the past by the uncertain lights of tradition, crumbling remains and indistinct foot-prints.

#### ANCESTRAL GRAVES.

It would be a satisfaction to the descendants of John and Susannah Spencer could they know that the graves of all their ancestors are located and properly marked. Unfortunately this is not the case. Amid the migrations and the movements of population and the pinchings of poverty and the struggles that have marked the pioneer history of our family and country our dead have doubtless received christian burial, but many are forgotten in unmarked and unknown graves. No hand can now rescue them from oblivion, but we may at least think of them as constituting missing links in the family pedigree.

#### THE GRAVES OF JOHN AND SUSANNAH SPENCER.

The writer is informed that the graves of John and Susannah Spencer, of Rhode Island colony, are known but unmarked. They are said to be on the homestead of one of their



descendants, who reverently cherishes them, and who will, it is presumed, gladly co-operate in any movement to permanently secure and mark their resting place and honor their memory. To this end I suggest that an association of their descendants be formed without unnecessary delay. Those who favor this suggestion will confer a favor by communicating with

ROBERT C. SPENCER, Milwaukee, Wis.

#### THE GRAVE OF THEOPHILUS WHALEY.

The descendants of Capt. Robert Spencer, fifth son of the first John Spencer of Rhode Island, and who married Theodosia Whaley, mother of his thirteen children, six daughters and seven sons, will be interested to know that the grave of her noted father, Theophilus Whaley, is known, but unmarked. The duty of his descendants, of whom the writer is one, to erect a suitable monument to his memory seems apparent. Mr. C. W. Hopkins, Providence, R. I., is a descendant of Theophilus Whaley and has investigated his history and pedigree. The results of his researches will soon be published. He concludes that Theophilus Whaley was first cousin to Oliver Cromwell and descended maternally from William the Conqueror.

I suggest that the descendants of Theophilus Whaley take immediate steps toward marking his grave and collecting and preserving family history and pedigree. Without having consulted him on the subject, I venture to name, as the proper person with whom to communicate regarding this matter,

C. W. HOPKINS, Providence, R. I.

#### RHODE ISLAND FAMILY GENEALOGY.

The descendants of the first John Spenceer, of Rhode Island, and of other Rhode Island families may obtain much valuable information regarding their pedigree from the Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island by Mr. John Osborn Austin, published by Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, N. Y., 1887. The Rhode Island Spenceer Family Chart, giving three generations, can be obtained by remitting fifty cents to

JOHN O. AUSTIN, Providence, R. I.













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JUL 7 1977

